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ART NEEDLEWORK

EMBROIDERY NOVELTIES.

SPECIMENS of a sort of work called "Marie Antoinette embroidery," for which great popularity is predicted, have lately come from England. This is a reproduction of the ribbon-work famous in the days of the young queen of the hapless Louis XVI. Broad plain ribbon appliques are laid upon a ground of some artistic shade of plush or cloth, and are worked down with stitches of fine twisted silk.

Arrasene and chenille are also introduced into this embroidery, the latter disposed, in some cases, as a lattice-work upon the ribbon. For curtain borders and for lambrequins this embroidery is especially effective.

Abundant use is made now of spangles, and of other small ornaments of gold, silver, or copper, cut very thin and with a hole in the middle, to be sewn on the material. Modern embroidery glistens with such adornings, recalling the old street song of the French Republic, having for its burden "paillette" or "spangle":

"Paillette aux rubans,
Aux turbans,
On ne voit rien sans
Paillette."

Crescents of metal are also introduced into the fringe or tassels of fire-screens, or four-o'clock tea-tables. Gold and silver thread, twist, and bullion, were never more largely used than now. What a change from the demure crewel-work on kitchen-crash, which ushered in the dawn of decorative embroidery! Now, the crewel-basket is ordered to the rear, and only an occasional skein or thread of most delicately-tinted wool is put into requisition to shade or tone the petal of a flower, or give body to a mass of foliage. Silks, lustrous and lustreless, twisted, roped and flossy, are applied to grounds of silk, satin, and plush, and illuminated by the Oriental glitter of lavish gold and silver. Canvas, with tinsel interwoven, has appliqué designs of cloth and velvet. Where linen, in its varieties, is now employed for embroidery purposes, exquisite washing silks are used to embellish it.

Satin pictures, printed from etched plates, are offered as novelties. They are to be framed in embroidery or appliqué upon different woven grounds. Tiny landscapes, wrought with almost imperceptible stitches in a circle of satin, with arrasene introduced to tone the foliage and grass, are a painful suggestion of over-taxed eye-sight, with very meagre results.

Cross-stitch embroidery is as much discussed and adopted as if there had never been such an old-time institution as a dame-school with a rod and a sampler to usher it into existence. Ingrained cottons are now manufactured in many different sizes, to meet the demand for cross-stitch patterns, the coarsest being suitable for working counterpanes, the finest for transferring pretty Russian designs to diaphanous cambric or China grass-cloth.

Venetian-work is an elaborate variety of decoration, copied from old Venetian gold lace, and interspersed with embroidery in colored silks. It is used for the embellishment of velvet dresses, for edging tea-tables, or for the lambrequin of a boudoir mantel-piece, where it is attached to a straight band of rich maroon or blue plush.

Japanese embroidery, imitated on a ground of Surah, and outlined with gold thread, has a rich effect for a table-cover, or should that prove too much of an undertaking, a cushion-cover. Many patterns carried out in twisted silk or chenille are padded at the back, giving them a raised effect. Grecian appliqué is outlined with gold, upon a ground of satin or velvet. Persian crêtonne, arranged in beautiful borderings upon velvet, and heavily embroidered, is very much used.

An exquisite robe for a slender young girl is made of cream cashmere, something after the fashion of Marguerite's in Faust. The hems and borders are of sapphire blue velvet, embroidered with silk and gold. The kid shoes are embroidered to match. Beading, intermingled with gold and silver, is also largely used

for decorating "picture" dresses, and, in fact, lavish ornament in dress and furniture seems to be carried so far that it can go no farther, and a simple hem or a bit of fringed-out stuff offers a welcome relief to the wearied eye.

Among holiday trifles was a sofa-cushion covered with maroon plush. On one side the corner of the cover turned back, was faced with satin, and revealed beneath it a gorgeous bit of striped embroidery, in gold and silk.

Doilies, in thinnish China silk, have etched designs in the centre, and delicate borders ready to be worked in washing silks. A charming fire-screen of Eastern blue plush has for design a golden bee-hive beneath a silver trellis-work. Flowers in silk are worked upon the trellis, and golden bees swarm among the blossoms.

A blotting book cover in black plush has the crest and initials of the owner embroidered in gold and silver thread, and is lined with orange moire-antique. Another such dainty appendage for the writing-table is made of dark seal-brown plush, scattered with embroidered knots of pink flowers and lined with pink moire;

in vogue now to work all over the centre of the table-cover, than merely a border as before. A handsome table-cover has a square of plush in the centre, and wide borders of silk sheeting entirely covered with an outline design worked in heavy twisted silk to correspond in color with the plush. A knotted fringe of silk and chenille completes this elegant drapery. Two reproductions of old Italian designs, applied severally to a mantel border and a cushion, are especially good. The one on the mantel border is worked on fawn-colored cloth in parti-colored silks, the pattern outlined in gold thread; the other, on the cushion, shows on a filled-in ground a flowery pattern in subdued shaded reds and rich greens, the work being laid on and sewn down, nothing but the fastening stitches passing through the ground.

A new tea-cloth is made of fine white damask, fringed at the edges, and heavily worked in outline with white linen thread. Borders of coarse diapered linen are very effective, when covered with a darned-in background, leaving the design in relief, merely outlined. Music-covers, intended to hold a single piece of music in its place upon the piano-rack, are worked in Japanese gold upon dull neutral-tinted linen, with touches of silk introduced. A set of toilet-covers made in tussore silk of a crushed-strawberry hue are most successful when worked with an outline design in cream washing-silk, and bordered with cream lace. The same idea has been adapted to doilies, for use beneath the finger-bowl.

For a piano-front and fire-place curtains designed for the same room, claret satin is used with appliques of plush of the same shade edged with gold thread. These curtains run upon a brass rod beneath the mantel-shelf, and when the fire is lighted are looped back with brass chains, quite out of reach of smoke or flying sparks.

A beautiful but perishable fire-screen was made of an Indian robe of black silk net, heavily worked with beetles' wings and gold tracteries, draped over a frame-work of carved ebonized wood. There seems no limit to the variety of decorative uses to which the Oriental draperies, now so abundantly imported, may be put. C. C. H.



DAMASK BANNER WITH FIFTEENTH CENTURY FLEMISH EMBROIDERIES.

IN THE HOCHON COLLECTION.

while still another has a ground of dark blue gros-grain silk, with a flight of swallows in shaded gray and white worked in silks upon one side.

A novel Christmas gift to an elderly lady was a carriage foot-rug of dark cloth richly embroidered, having attached to it in the centre a fur-lined plush muff for the feet.

A beautiful counterpane of cream washing-silk is worked with a design in coral-colored silk, partly outlined, and partly darned. The spaces of the ground are covered with small "fly" stitches or arrow-heads of silk, and the border is finished with a solid line of stem-stitching in the same red. This work may be agreeably varied for a number of household objects, and the filling stitch for the ground may range from elaborate "honeycomb" and "trellis" to the tiny stitches above suggested.

Diagonal serge in all the quiet shades is still much used as a ground for embroidery. To cushion a wicker-chair, or to serve as table-cover or screen-panel, it is equally serviceable. It is more

carries a vase, another holds a shell to her ear, a third has a flower-pot, and a fourth a rose.

Gold, it should be observed, is now introduced into almost everything, not only as an outline, but mingled with the body of the work, in which it does not so much appear as serve to give brilliancy to the general effect.

THE illustration on this page shows a curious example of old ecclesiastical embroidery, exhibited at the last Exposition of the Union Centrale des Arts Décoratifs at Paris. It is a banner in dead-leaf damask silk, with an appliqué of embroidery on linen, representing bishops' heads and angels bearing attributes of the Passion. The artist has skillfully used the linen background for the faces, only indicating the contours and features by some small points of embroidery, and thus producing a strong effect by the simplest means.